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HYDE PARK

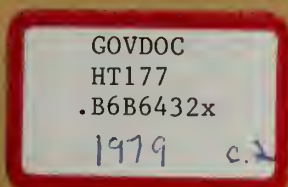
DISTRICT PROFILE AND PROPOSED 1979-1981
NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

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City of Boston
Kevin H. White, *Mayor*

Boston Redevelopment Authority
Neighborhood Planning Program

1979





HYDE PARK



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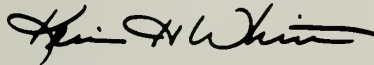
The Neighborhood Planning Department of the Boston Redevelopment Authority has prepared this document to assist Hyde Park residents and City agencies in designing programs that meet the needs of the community.

Since 1968, Hyde Park has benefited from an increased commitment to Boston's neighborhoods. The City has constructed a fire station and two parking lots in Cleary Square, and made renovations to District V Police Station, the YMCA building, Fairmount Housing Project and the William Barton Rogers School. In addition, approximately \$1.0 million has been spent on park and playground improvements and over \$1.2 million in Housing Improvement Program rebates have been made to Hyde Park homeowners.

This planning document can serve as a resource and a guide to future efforts in Hyde Park. The ultimate success of this Administration's efforts to revitalize Boston's neighborhoods depends upon the participation of residents in the planning process.

I urge you to study the recommendations in this document and ask for your participation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin H. White". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "K" and a stylized "W".

Kevin H. White
Mayor

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I. Introduction/Summary

Hyde Park, a neighborhood of 36,000 people, is surrounded by West Roxbury, Roslindale, Mattapan and the towns of Milton and Dedham. It has outstanding open space and recreational opportunities, including the George Wright Municipal Golf Course and the 450 acre Stonybrook Reservation.

While much of the housing is relatively new, there are a number of Victorian homes, many with unusual architectural detail. There are also several large townhouses and garden apartment complexes built during the late 1950's/early 1960's housing boom.

A large percent of the housing is small single-family homes costing between \$25,000 and \$35,000, while Victorian homes tend to be priced in the high \$40's to low \$50's. A two-bedroom apartment will rent for \$250. Residential values are generally increasing.

Cleary Square is the main commercial center providing personal services, convenience stores, restaurants and municipal offices. Parking is no problem as a result of two new off-street lots constructed by the City. Public transportation is provided by bus and commuter rail services.

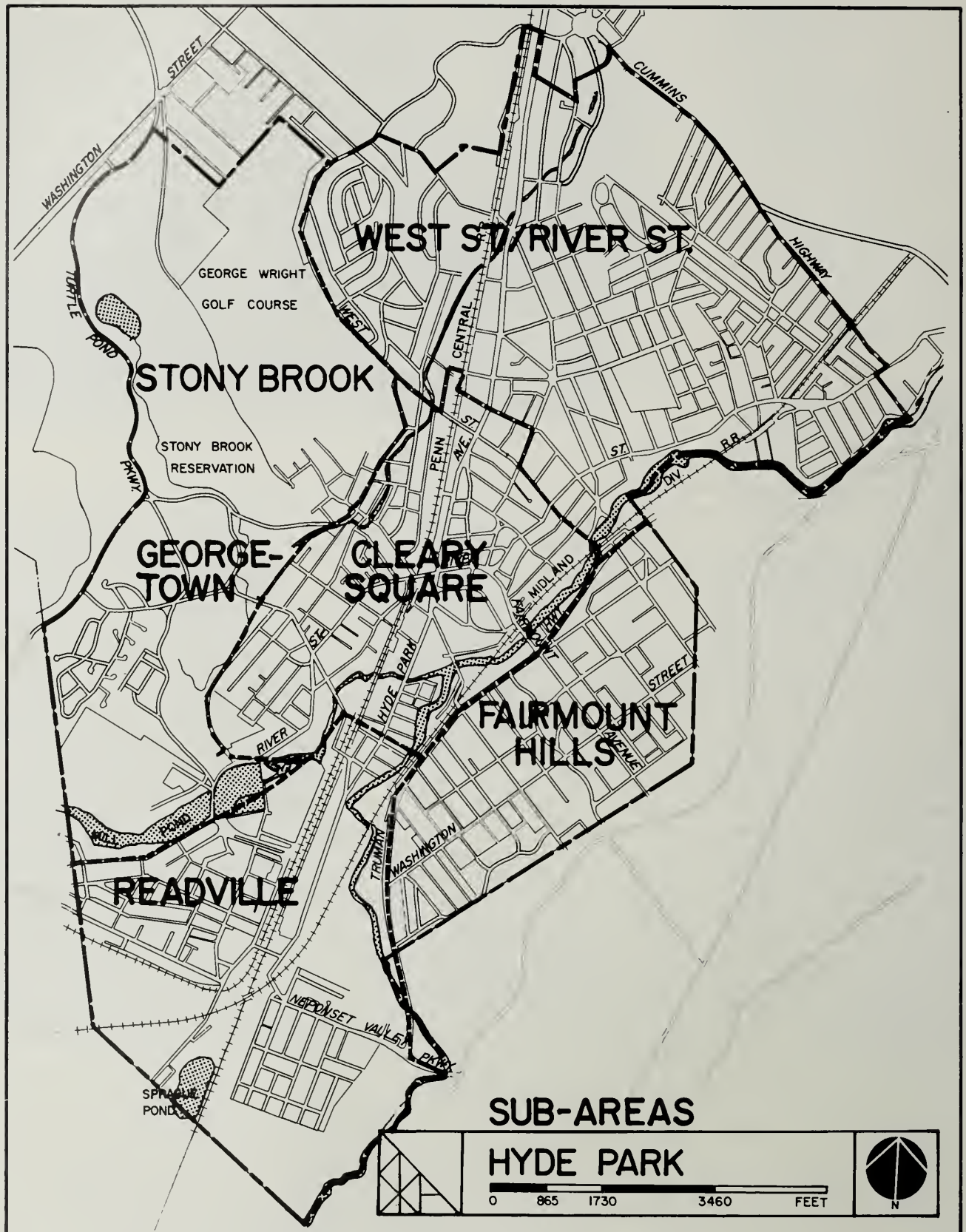
Manufacturing plays a large role in Hyde Park's economy. The Westinghouse Sturtevant Division and Diamond International are some of the largest employers. There are also several vacant parcels of developable industrial property, many with rail access. The industrial district also offers several buildings, both modern and those with historical interest, which would suit industrial or office needs. These also have rail access, or riverside boundaries. All industrial areas in Hyde Park are 10-15 minutes away from Route 128.



Home in Cleary Square area.

Since 1977, over \$575,000 has been spent for Housing Improvement Program rebates and \$275,000 for improvements to the Fairmount Housing Project. Street and sidewalk improvements total \$305,600 under Capital Budget and Public Works outlays. Total expenditures from CDBG and Capital Budget equals \$1.7 million for this time period.

In addition to continuation of the Housing Improvement Program, the City should increase attention to street, sidewalk, sewer and water line maintenance and reconstruction, where needed. Major renovations should be scheduled for the Hyde Park Municipal Building and the Readville Fire Station. Funds should also be made available for design of a transportation terminal and redesign of major traffic intersections with appropriate traffic signalization in Cleary Square to relieve traffic congestion. The Economic Development and Industrial Commission should focus attention on the development of Hyde Park's vacant industrial property as well as supporting existing firms. Both private and City youth agencies should receive support to address the needs of Hyde Park youth. The Parks and Recreation Department should receive adequate funding to assure maintenance of the many parks and recreational fields.



II. District Profile

A. EXISTING COMMUNITY NEEDS

Since 1960, Hyde Park has been experiencing a steady increase in population of about 1,000 people every five years. In 1976, Hyde Park's total population was 36,150; by 1985, it is estimated to reach 38,500. In 1970, the minority population was 1.2%; by 1976, the percentage had risen to 4.6%. The 1978 Plessner survey reported that Hyde Park contains a higher proportion of elderly than the City as a whole. Slightly over 50% of the neighborhood's population is over 40 years old; 13.5% are over the age of 65.

Approximately 33% of those employed in Hyde Park are in blue-collar occupations while about 40% are in white-collar and professional occupations. The median family income, as revealed by the 1978 Plessner survey, was between \$12,500 and \$14,900, slightly above City levels.

Unemployment has closely followed national trends: 3.5% in 1970, 15.8% in 1975, 6.8% in 1977. However, over 900 manufacturing jobs have left Hyde Park during that time. This indicates a need for attracting new industries to Hyde Park and monitoring remaining firms' needs to maintain and add to the existing job market.

Housing consists primarily of fairly new, one or two family structures. There are also many well-kept, moderately priced Victorian homes in the Fairmount, Cleary Square and River Street areas. There is a higher level of owner occupancy than in the average City neighborhood and few vacant buildings.

Hyde Park experienced a building boom in single family construction during the 1950's and early 1960's. Consequently a large number of young families arrived creating the need for school construction and family oriented activities and services. Many of these homeowners have remained; their children are young adults; the parents are middle age and growing older. Many are entering the "empty nest" life cycle when they no longer need three bedroom houses, and will soon be selling their homes, providing an opportunity for a new

influx of younger persons and families.

The 1977 Hart Survey reflected an erosion in attitudes toward both the City and neighborhood from past to present to future. This attitude is probably a result of a combination of factors: the empty nest syndrome, higher unemployment among those aged 45 and concern over tax rates. In addition, rumors concerning "blockbusting" had been occurring. These rumors probably started as a result of the increased pressure tactics used by brokers to obtain listings in the current tight housing market. However, a study of housing prices between 1975 and 1978 revealed that the value of an average house in Hyde Park is rising steadily — from \$24,000 in 1975 to \$26,000 in 1978. In addition, real estate brokers indicate that investment potential is considerable in Hyde Park, due to low price and good condition of the housing stock.

Cleary Square is Hyde Park's major commercial center. The Square's problems include traffic congestion, vandalism and obsolescent merchandising techniques. Like most of Boston's older commercial centers, Cleary Square has had problems in holding its customers because of competition from nearby suburban centers in Quincy, Braintree and Dedham which are both convenient and attractive to shoppers.

To relieve congestion, major street realignment and traffic signalization for turning movements at Hyde Park Avenue/River Street intersection is needed. Design control of renovation work and active marketing to vacant property is also needed to effect revitalization in Cleary Square.

Wolcott Square is a smaller, yet important commercial area that needs to be addressed. Selected site improvements to the park area and sidewalk reconstruction have been completed. The actual structural condition and storefront appearance of this commercial district have not received attention to date. As the primary commercial district for Readville, there is a definite reason to encourage revitalization in Wolcott Square.

The rail improvements scheduled for the Penn Central Mainline will necessitate the termination of all com-

muter rail activity on this line between 1979 and 1983. During this time, service will continue on the Middlesex Branch. A commuter stop will be constructed under the Fairmount Avenue bridge, near Cleary Square. Following completion, the present stop will be resumed. A transportation terminal to combine parking needs of increased commuter patronage, with bus connection and taxi service should be constructed during this interim. In addition, this terminal would decrease congestion in the Square by giving the buses an adequate area in which to turn around.



Home near Ross Field, River Street area.

1. River/West Streets

Located in the northeastern portion of the district, this sub-area is bounded by Mattapan and Roslindale. In 1970, its population was 14,837, an increase of 12% over 1960. This growth can be attributed to new apartment construction in the Cummins Highway/American Legion Highway area and to scattered single family construction in the West Street area.

In 1970, median family income ranged between \$10,289 and \$10,937, which is close to the City median. Only 4% of the families had incomes under \$5,000.

The eastern half of this sector, from the Mattapan border to Metropolitan Avenue is undergoing racial transition; and most new homeowners are middle class families. As in most neighborhoods in Hyde Park, housing prices have continued to rise. The HIP 20% rebate program has been utilized in this neighborhood and most houses are in excellent condition.

In 1970, approximately 600 of the 4,714 housing units in the River/West



Fairmount Ave.

Streets area needed repairs in excess of \$1,000 each. Most of these units were located in the vicinity of the Cummins Tower Apartments and American Legion Highway.

This area has a relatively low percentage of owner-occupied units (28%) relative to the overall district (58%). The district does contain a large number of older two and three family homes and new apartment complexes. Single family houses are largely concentrated in the vicinity of West Street.

2. Cleary Square

Located in the central portion of Hyde Park, Cleary Square is bounded by the Stonybrook Reservation, West Street, Neponset River and Readville. Its 1970 population was 8,153, a gain of 31% over 1960. Much of this growth can be attributed to new single-family home construction in the area west of the Penn Central railroad tracks.

Median family income was comparable to the district-wide median of \$10,700, and 13% of total families in 1970 had median incomes under \$5,000. Fourteen percent of this district's population is elderly.

Of the 2,689 units surveyed in 1973, 339 (13%) needed repairs in excess of \$1,000 each. Most of this housing is located south of Cleary Square along the industrial belt on Hyde Park Avenue.

There are also a number of apartment houses in this sub-area, many of which are located along River Street near Cleary Square. Almost 55% of the structures are owner-occupied.

Light industry and manufacturing companies are also located in this neighborhood. Westinghouse's Sturtevant Division has been located here since 1870. Some structures which

once served as warehouses now are partially vacant and underutilized. Many of the structures are in deteriorating condition and detract from the surrounding residential area.

3. Fairmount Hills

Located in the southeastern portion of Hyde Park, this sub-area borders Milton to the east and the Midland Railroad line in the west. In 1970, Fairmount Hills' population was 7,017, an increase of 29% over 1960. This growth was primarily due to new single-family home construction.

The population in this sub-area showed an increase in the proportion of elderly (24%) and youth 15-19 (33%) during the last decade. Median family income was \$11,057 which exceeded the district's median of \$10,693.

For the most part, Fairmount Hills is recognized as a prestigious neighborhood where large, gracious brick Colonial and woodframe Victorian houses are located on spacious lots. Real estate values are strong in this neighborhood. Concern for continued neighborhood preservation has caused local residents to organize an effective neighborhood association to promote its identity.

In 1970, only 125 housing units in this sub-area, representing 4% of total units, required repairs exceeding \$1,000. These houses were generally concentrated near Truman Highway.

Approximately 63% of Fairmount Hills' total units were owner-occupied.

The Fairmount Public Housing Project, opened in 1950, contains 202 units in a townhouse design. Historically this project has not had a negative influence on the surrounding residential community. It has had extremely low vacancy and turnover rates and the highest per capita income of the 57 Boston Housing Authority projects. Although the development has suffered from deferred maintenance, new roofing and aluminum siding have improved its appearance. The comprehensive modernization program planned by the BHA should be implemented to prevent further deterioration of the project, and mitigate its effect on adjoining areas.

4. Stonybrook/Georgetown

Located near West Roxbury in the western portion of the district, this sub-area is centered on the Georgetown Housing development which was completed during the late 1960's. There are also a number of cape-style, single family homes constructed on the slopes, as well as a section of duplex houses owned by the U.S. Coast Guard for married personnel and their families. In 1970, this area contained 878 housing units and a population of 2,674 people. Median family income (\$10,289) was slightly below the district median and the

Pond in Stonybrook Reservation.



number of families earning less than \$5,000 was 462 (12%).

The terrain of this entire district is irregular and subject to occasional spontaneous flooding. Inadequate water pressure has been a problem and residents are concerned that the present sewerage system is inadequate to service the many houses in the area. Turtle Pond Parkway, an MDC roadway, runs through this section and is heavily traveled.

This area contains several hundred acres of open space land including the City's George Wright Golf Course, and the Metropolitan District Commission's (MDC) Turtle Pond and Stonybrook Reservation. The MDC is currently undertaking a multi-million dollar conservation/recreation program for the Stonybrook Reservation, to provide better active and passive recreation and to better conserve its natural areas.

This district has been the location of several large housing development proposals. Community opposition has been intense and zoning restrictions have prevented their construction. Additional housing development will likely be proposed because this area contains such large vacant tracts of land. The issues of drainage, access, zoning and land conservation will have to be carefully addressed by the community and the City to prevent the natural features of this district from being lost.

5. Readville

Located in the southern portion of the district and bounded by the Town of Dedham, Stonybrook Reservation, Cleary Square, and the Neponset River, this sub-area is generally viewed as a separate neighborhood within the Hyde Park community. In 1970, its population was 4,149, an increase of 25% over 1960, and is a result of new apartment and single-family home construction.

In 1970, median family income ranged from \$10,289 to \$11,051, slightly higher than the district median. Only 15% of the total families had median incomes under \$5,000.

Of the 2,593 housing units recorded in 1970, 291 (11%) required repairs in excess of \$1,000 each. Most of these units are located in the older portion of Readville, south of Neponset



Wolcott Square in Readville.

Valley Parkway. Approximately 53% of Readville's total units are owner-occupied.

Wolcott Square is Readville's only commercial center and has approximately 10 stores, and is bordered by Neponset Valley Parkway, Hyde Park Avenue and the Penn Central Railroad. The existing buildings generally need structural renovations and the storefronts, which have been heavily vandalized, need improvements as well. The embankment along the railroad line is poorly lit and landscaped. In addition, there is traffic congestion along Hyde Park Avenue and Neponset Valley Parkway at certain busy hours. As a focal point in this otherwise orderly community, Wolcott Square is a negative influence in need of renovation.

There is a relatively new shopping center located north of Readville along Truman Highway and includes a supermarket and several retail and service establishments. Adjacent to this are an MDC concert shell and tennis courts which are currently being rehabilitated and expanded by the MDC to provide greater recreational opportunities for Readville.

The Readville Improvement Association which was reorganized to focus attention on conditions at Camp Meigs, an MDC playground, has grown to be an effective force in the community. It has strong residential support and is seeking remedies to Readville's problems of vandalism, neglected playground facilities and traffic hazards. Recently the City's Corporation Counsel has designated Readville a sub-area of Boston, separate from Hyde Park, in response to residents' concerns. Although Readville residents had hoped such a designation would enable them to have their own Little City Hall, Police Station and other services, the change is one in name only.

The former Readville Rail Yards recently received national attention when it became known that Amtrak officials were seriously considering this location for the construction of their proposed heavy repair facility. That decision is still pending. The site had also been considered for a Track-Laying Base for the Northeast Corridor Rail Improvement Program. However, this would have caused excessive trucking activity along residential streets; the base is currently located in Littleton, Massachusetts. Currently, Amtrak is proposing the construction of a Maintenance of Way facility, which would support 150 jobs and have little negative impact on the surrounding environment.

COMPARATIVE STATISTICS — HYDE PARK
1970 U.S. Census Data

	River/ West Street	Cleary Square	Fairmount Hills	Stonybrook/ Georgetown
Population				
Total 1970	14,837	8,153	7,017	2,675
Change from '60	+ 12%	+ 31%	+ 29%	NA
Aged 15-19 yrs.	1,413	585	719	223
Change from '60	+ 16%	+ 11%	+ 33%	NA
Aged 20-24 yrs. 1970	1,204	587	513	181
Change from '60	+ 40%	+ 34%	+ 46%	NA
Aged 65 yrs. & over 1970	1,778	802	697	199
Change from '60	+ 15%	+ 14%	+ 24%	NA
Income				
Median Family	\$10,289 — 10,939	\$10,289 — 10,662	\$11,057	\$10,289
% Families under \$5,000	4%	13%	12%	12%
Housing				
Total Dwelling Units	4,714	2,689	2,840	878
Units Needing Repairs in excess of \$1,000	580	339	125	29
Owner Occupied Units	24%	54%	63%	0%
Mobility of Residents — % Residents in same house over 5 years in 1970	65%	65%	65%	60%

NA = not available.

	Readville	District	City
Population			
Total 1970	4,419	36,509	639,803
Change from '60	+ 25%	+ 28%	— 8%
Aged 15-19 yrs.	380	3,037	60,900
Change from '60	+ 22%	+ 15%	+ 17%
Aged 20-24 yrs. 1970	441	2,819	76,958
Change from '60	+ 38%	+ 38%	+ 41%
Aged 65 yrs. & over 1970	409	3,749	81,437
Change from '60	+ 13%	+ 14%	— 5%
Income			
Median Family	\$10,289 — 11,051	\$10,693	\$9,133
% Families under \$5,000	14.5%	12%	22%
Housing			
Total Dwelling Units	2,593	10,735	232,401
Units Needing Repairs in excess of \$1,000	291	1,364	67,102
Owner-Occupied Units	53%	58%	27%
Mobility of Residents — % Residents in same house over 5 years in 1970	65%	65%	50%

B. PAST MAJOR PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INVESTMENT (1968-1977)

Since 1968, the major thrust of the City's Capital Improvement Program has been in strengthening neighborhoods thorough the construction and renovation of community facilities and parks, the reconstruction of streets and the replacement of sewer and water lines. The City spent \$700,000 on the construction of a new Hyde Park Fire Station on Fairmount Avenue; \$60,000 for renovations to Readville Playground; \$230,000 for floodlights and restoration at Ross Field; \$400,000 for reconstruction of Amatucci Playground; and \$4,800 for renovations to Smith Field Playground. (See Public Facilities map.)



Construction of Ross Field Hockey Facility.

The parking area in Cleary Square has increased 200 spaces by the construction of a \$275,000 municipal parking lot on Winthrop Street. In addition, \$320,000 was spent by the City for the acquisition and construction of a 100-space parking lot near the commuter rail stop near the Hyde Park Avenue/River Street intersection. Other major expenditures include \$42,000 for rehabilitation of the YMCA building, \$80,000 for fencing and lighting at the Readville Playground, \$539,000 for renovations to District 5 Police Station, \$196,000 for the Ross Field Hockey Facility, \$200,000 for renovations to the William Barton Rogers School, and \$310,000 for roofing, aluminum siding and electrical improvements at the Fairmount Housing Project.

At the same time, there were over 77 streets reconstructed or resurfaced, 10 streets that underwent sewer or water line replacements, 16 sidewalks replaced, 6 streets with new lighting including new sodium vapor commercial lighting in Cleary Square, and over 100 streets had their lighting intensity increased. West Street from Hyde Park Avenue to Metropolitan Avenue underwent street, sidewalk and sewer reconstruction. In addition, sidewalks in Wolcott Square were reconstructed (see Public Improvements map).

Other investments include \$20,000 for 20% rebates for storefront improvements under the RESTORE program, \$198,600 for police footpatrols in Cleary and Wolcott Squares, and \$56,916 for the operation of a senior shuttle.

As of April, 1979, 1,752 homeowners had applied for both 20% and 50% rebates under the Housing Improvement Program. In 1977 HIP instituted a 50% rebate program for elderly or low income homeowners who desired to receive rebates for improvements to their homes. HIP has rebated over \$800,000 to homeowners for repairs. Coupled with the homeowners' own investments, this adds up to over \$4,000,000 in home improvements in Hyde Park as a result of this program.

The Metropolitan District Commission has made extensive capital investment in park and recreation areas in Hyde Park particularly along Truman Highway and the Stonybrook Reservation. Camp Meigs and Colella Playground renovations have been completed. The Massachusetts Department of Public Works has completed reconstruction of the River Street Bridge over the Mill Pond and the Milton Street Bridge.

C. 1978 PUBLIC INVESTMENT PROGRAM

The 1978-1979 Community Development Block Grant (federal) and neighborhood capital improvement budget (City) focus on investment in four major areas: housing, business districts, human services and physical improvements in residential areas.

1. Housing

Allocation for the Housing Improvement Program includes both the 20% rebate and 50% rebate for elderly and low income homeowners.

HIP —

approximately 500 buildings	\$350,000
Fairmount Housing Project —	
Security Patrol	32,120
Ross Field —	
Security Patrol	16,060

2. Business Districts

This is the second year of the City's three-year Cleary Square revitalization program. This year funds are being used for: (1) staffing for the Hyde Park Development Corporation (\$25,000); (2) Cleary Square Security Patrol (\$53,065); and (3) RESTORE (store renovation) program rebates (\$20,000).

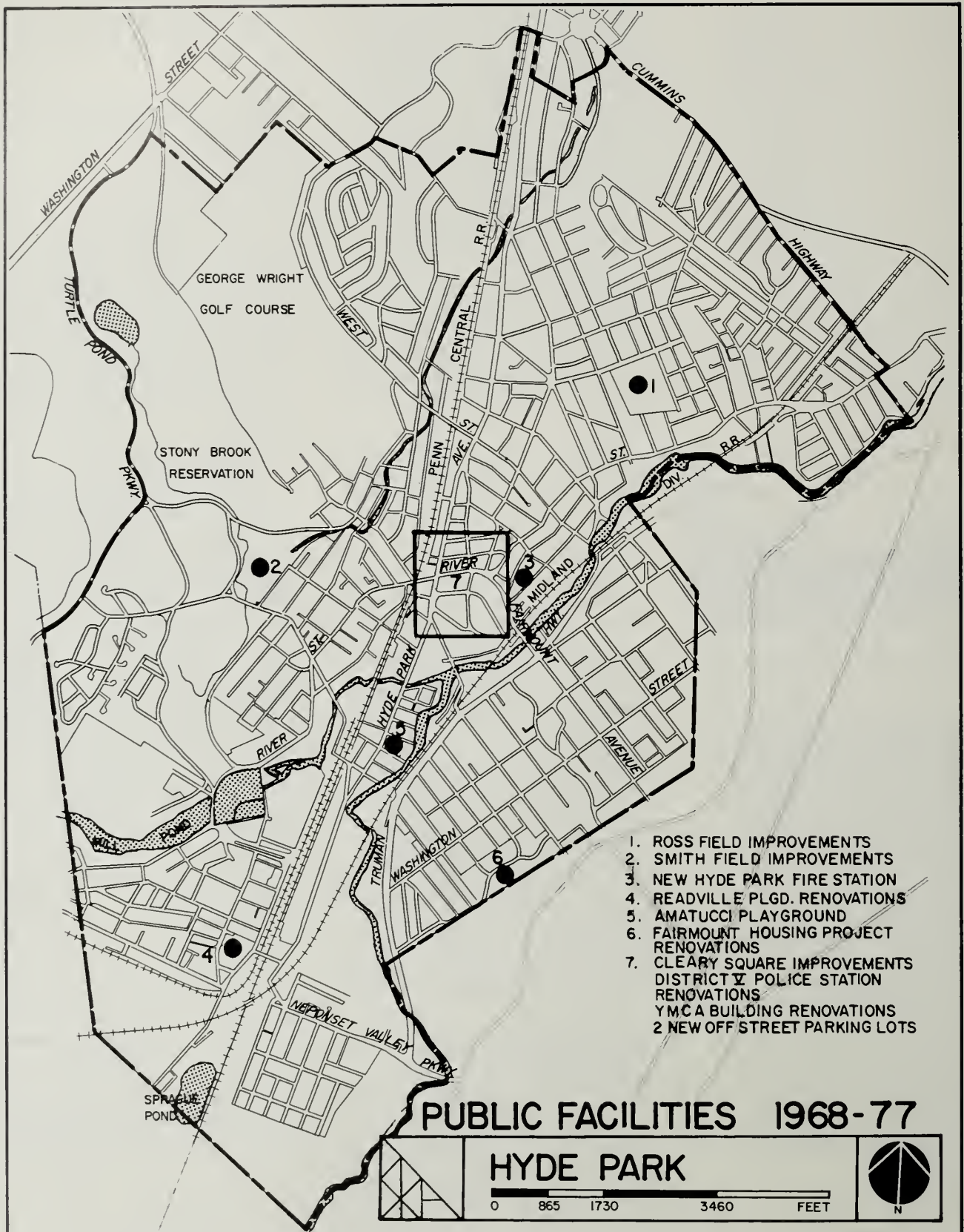
3. Human Services

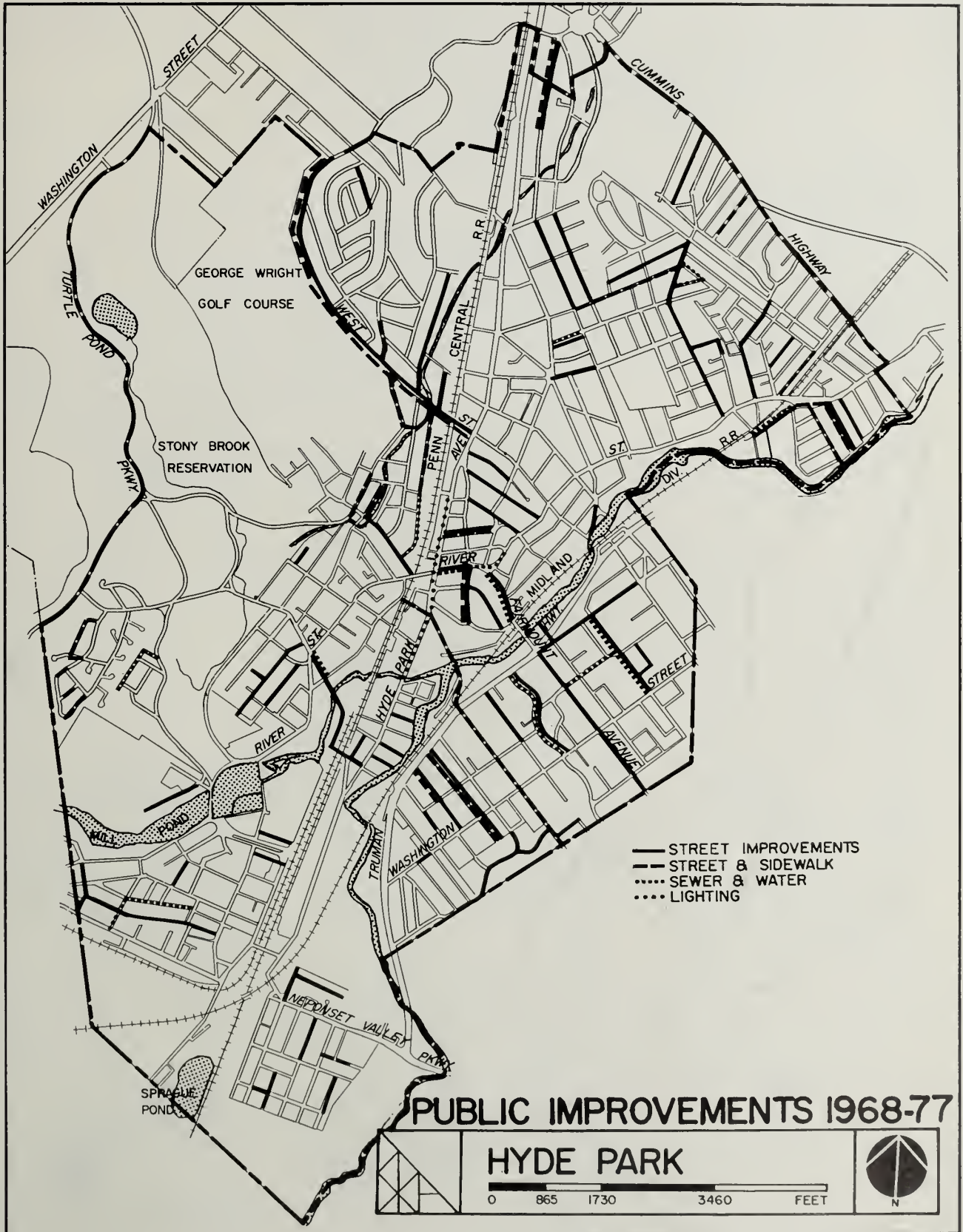
This year \$28,700 has been allocated to complete renovations at the Hyde Park YMCA. Two senior shuttles are required to meet the needs of the elderly; this required an allocation of \$34,000 for drivers and vehicles. Youth recreational program needs will be addressed by a \$15,000 allocation to the Hyde Park Youth Activities Development Corporation. St. Nazareth's Day Care Center received a \$25,000 allocation for services provided to Hyde Park children.

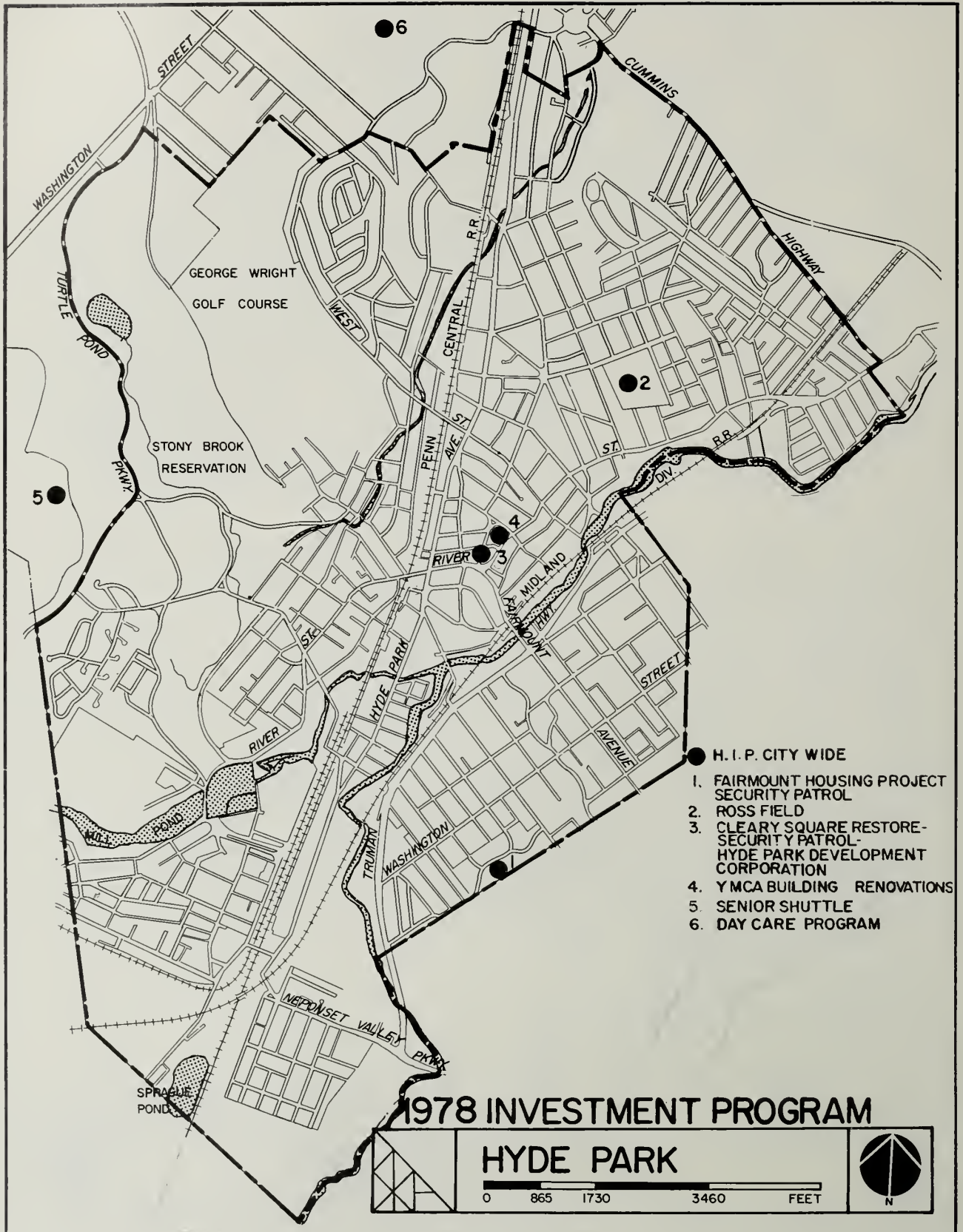
4. Physical Improvements

The following projects have been funded:

Ross Field —	
additional light towers	\$ 90,000
Ruskindale Road —	
resurfacing	3,200
Roseberry Road —	
resurfacing	6,400
Unspecified resurfacing	100,000
48 trees —	
Huntington Avenue	12,000
(Collins St. to Thatcher)	
40 trees —	
scattered locations	10,000
Total Neighborhood Improvement Program	\$820,000







III. Proposed Comprehensive Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy

A. HOUSING DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Most of the housing in the neighborhood is in good condition. However, there are three areas in Hyde Park which evidence some housing deterioration: (1) the area south of Cleary Square, between the Penn Central Midlands Branch and the Main Line Branch; (2) the area in Readville along the Main Line Railroad; and (3) the area along Summer and Business Streets. The Housing Improvement Program should be targeted to those areas.

The real estate market is healthy despite rumors of blockbusting and red-lining. Demand for Hyde Park housing continues to be strong, and values are increasing. Many residents continue to feel uncomfortable about their property values. In an effort to combat these negative self-perceptions, the BRA will undertake an extensive survey of new homeowners to develop a profile of homeownership characteristics. This will be prepared for release in the Summer of 1979. The HIP program should also be targeted to new homeowners. The formation of block clubs and active participation by residents in these and existing neighborhood organizations is still the most effective strategy for developing confidence in a residential area. Residents can also use neighborhood groups to promote a positive image for Hyde Park. This has worked successfully in other neighborhoods by groups working towards preservation of Urban Wilds sites, Landmarks Commission designation of buildings residents would like to rehabilitate and preserve, and publication of posters and brochures.

New single family home construction is also planned in Hyde Park. A site on Arborfield Road was selected by the BRA since it is in a single family residential area and part of the land intended for the now defunct extension of I-95. The land is to be transferred from the State to the BRA and



Fairmount Housing Project Renovations.

advertisements for developers will be forthcoming in the near future.

Another housing strategy will be to use part of the approximately six acres of land intended for the I-95 extension for the construction of an elderly housing project on Summer Street. This was in response to a recent Boston Housing Authority study which indicated Hyde Park had a significant lack of elderly housing.

The project will be built by the Boston Housing Authority, who will then contract out the management to a private, or non-profit, company. The State Department of Community Affairs (D.C.A.) has appropriated funding, and design of this 104 unit townhouse complex, with community center, is now underway. Construction is expected to begin in Summer, 1979.

Beacon Construction Co. is the developer of a 100 unit elderly housing project on the former Allis Chalmers property which is within walking distance of Cleary Square. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has awarded Section 8 rental subsidy funds, and the Boston Redevelopment Authority has approved a Chapter 121A tax agreement required to make the project feasible. Construction should begin in Spring, 1979.

Rehabilitation work on the Fairmount Housing Project began in October 1978. This work includes reroofing,

new gutters and downspouts, clearance of clogged drains, vinyl siding, aluminum trim, attic insulation and selected door and hallway painting. Plans are also underway for additional off-street parking. Funds for these projects come from the CDBG and State Modernization programs. In addition, a recent court order outlines a Fair Housing Plan for all BHA projects. Confusion over this mandate, combined with the project's relative isolation from the rest of Hyde Park and lack of structured activity for youth, has led to a few outbreaks of vandalism. An immediate strategy to address this has been security patrols and outreach by the Youth Activities Commission.

B. NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL REVITALIZATION PROGRAM

Cleary Square, as the main intersection and commercial district in Hyde Park, suffers from traffic congestion. Like most older urban commercial districts, it has lost customers to new suburban shopping malls. Most consumers reside within a one mile radius of the area and are attracted to the Square for convenience items and personal services, such as banks and lawyers' and doctors' offices. While many merchants cannot afford to improve their storefronts and product line, there is a proliferation of fast food establishments. Renovations which have been made are generally



Logan Square in Cleary Square Retail District.

uncoordinated and detract from the overall appearance of the Square.

A unified approach to renovation is needed. Merchants and property owners should work together towards an attractive image for the Square. This can be accomplished by the formation of a Design Review Committee with technical assistance provided by the BRA and Neighborhood Business District Program. The Committee would advise all renovations, devise a marketing effort for underutilized and vacant property, and develop a Cleary Square logo and advertising campaign. This new image should be based on Cleary Square's existing positive qualities which malls do not provide: personal relationships between merchants and customers, and buildings which possess attractive architectural detail.

A study of present usage of retail and office space in Cleary Square has been completed. A marketing analysis to determine the retail needs of Hyde Park is being planned for 1979. The results of these studies will enable planners to determine a marketing strategy for vacant space in Cleary Square.

In addition, the City should secure funding for redesign of major traffic intersections along with appropriate traffic signalization. Funds should be allocated for amenities such as trees, planters, trash receptacles and other

pedestrian amenities in an effort to create a more enjoyable shopping environment. Adequate funds for cleaning and routine maintenance of the two newly constructed city-owned parking lots should be made available so that shoppers will perceive them as the assets they were intended to be.

The Neighborhood Business District Program should use RESTORE funds to assist storefront renovation in Wolcott Square. In addition, the owners of the properties should be encouraged to make needed structural repairs to bring their buildings into code compliance, and the City should also consider tax abatements or low interest loans as an incentive for renovation.

C. JOB AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Since 1970, over 900 jobs have been lost in Hyde Park. There are over 43 acres of vacant, developable industrial property. Other industrial property is underutilized, such as the 22 acre tract at Wolcott Square. This choice property which has both rail and highway access is being used by Conrail as a large parking lot for "piggyback" trucks. The Cotton Mill building near Mill Pond has two upper floors of vacant space. This building has historical interest as one of the oldest mill buildings in the

country, which would make it attractive to developers.

An intensified industrial marketing effort is needed by both private realtors and the City's Economic Development and Industrial Commission. Outreach should be made to existing firms to prevent them from relocating outside of Hyde Park.

D. PUBLIC FACILITIES AND PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS

The Municipal Building has been a landmark in Cleary Square and has long been in need of major renovations. The Boston Plan for Hyde Park notes the need for a mixed-use civic center to provide indoor recreation space, community meeting rooms and a location for county and municipal hearing rooms. Renovation of the Municipal Building would assist in meeting these needs.

The City should actively prepare the design for major rehabilitation of the Municipal Building to include space for indoor athletic and recreation programs and municipal/civic center uses.

Water pressure has been a constant complaint of residents of Hyde Park, especially in the Stonybrook area, Windham Street, Linden Street and in neighborhoods adjacent to the Milton town line. The City should continue to examine this problem.

Both the George Wright Health Center and the Readville Fire Station are housed in inadequate facilities and are in need of renovations in the near future.

E. TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS

Hyde Park is unique in that it is crisscrossed by two rail lines and two rivers — Mother Brook and Neponset River. This necessitates a dependence on bridges to support not only normal use by residents, but also heavy industrial use. It is crucial that these bridges meet safety standards.

The Milton Street Bridge and the River Street Bridge over Mill Pond have been reconstructed. The Reservation Road Bridge in Readville is scheduled for reconstruction and the West Street Bridge is undergoing temporary rehabilitation. The repairs to

the West Street Bridge scheduled for Spring, 1979 will only be a temporary means of keeping the bridge open. Complete bridge reconstruction will be necessary within the next three years for this bridge to remain open to traffic. However, the City should pursue funding for reconstruction of the Sprague Street Bridge. The viability of this bridge is important for further industrial development in the Readville, Wolcott and Reservation Road industrial areas.

The City of Boston and the MBTA should begin work on a joint development project for a transportation terminal to be located at the present railroad stop along the Penn Central Mainline in Cleary Square. This terminal was recommended as a part of the 1976 comprehensive revitalization strategy for Cleary Square. The terminal could incorporate a bus turnaround, commuter shelter, taxi stand and retail/office center. Such a facility would reduce traffic congestion, provide a safe facility for transit users, and serve as a focus for increased retail development in this improving commercial sector. Design of this mixed-use facility should begin within the next 12 months so that construction can be phased to coincide with improvements to the line scheduled for 1979-1984.

F. HUMAN SERVICES

The need for human service programs and agencies has been underrated in Hyde Park for many years because of its above-city average income and educational levels. Teenage vandalism and purse snatchings are now a concern.

A recent study of the social service needs of adolescents recommends increased coordination of existing agencies. A coalition for youth services should be formed of representatives from the appropriate agencies and teens to accomplish this goal.

An important key to improving human services has been the reconstruction of the YMCA building. This has enabled the YMCA to offer many recreational programs for children aged 6-14 and to house a Headstart Program. However, an addition to the building would greatly improve human services by allowing space for those 14 and over, including



Sprague Pond, Hyde Park, a neighborhood beauty spot with a lovely view of the Great Blue Hill.

adults. Renovation of the Municipal Building will also provide additional needed community recreational space.

Elderly services, especially in the area of health care will increasingly demand attention and should be supported whenever possible. As stated above, the George White Health Center should be renovated so as to better provide quality care for Hyde Park's elderly citizens.

G. RETENTION OF OPEN AND UNDERUTILIZED VACANT LAND

There is a large amount of open and vacant land in Hyde Park. The MDC's Stonybrook Reservation and City's George Wright Golf Course are both within Hyde Park. There are also large tracts of vacant land scattered along the Neponset River and the Penn Central (Southwest Corridor). The Readville yards of the Penn Central include 60-100 acres of land which could support more intensive industrial use.

There is concern by residents that many open and vacant areas should be protected and not developed. In recent years, residents in the Gordon

Avenue/Emmet Street area opposed development of townhouses on a 16-acre tract adjacent to the Stonybrook Reservation because the proposal eliminated a large open and natural area. Most recently, a commercial development on Barry's Quarry was opposed on the basis that the area could not support additional shopping and that the particular land contained natural vegetation and wildlife which should be protected.

Development pressures for multi-family housing is likely to occur in the near future because vacant land is available in large tracts. These areas present difficult construction conditions and are restrictively zoned. The important considerations of land conservation and economic growth have to be reassessed with respect to development potential in Hyde Park.

The City's strategy for retaining open and underutilized areas in Hyde Park depends heavily on the use of zoning and land acquisition tools. Most areas which have come under development pressure in recent years, i.e., Barry's Quarry, Austin Street and Gordon Avenue, have required City approvals by the Zoning Commission or Board of Appeals because variances or ex-

ceptions from existing zoning were needed. This has meant that the City's discretionary powers can be useful to protect the district's open areas.

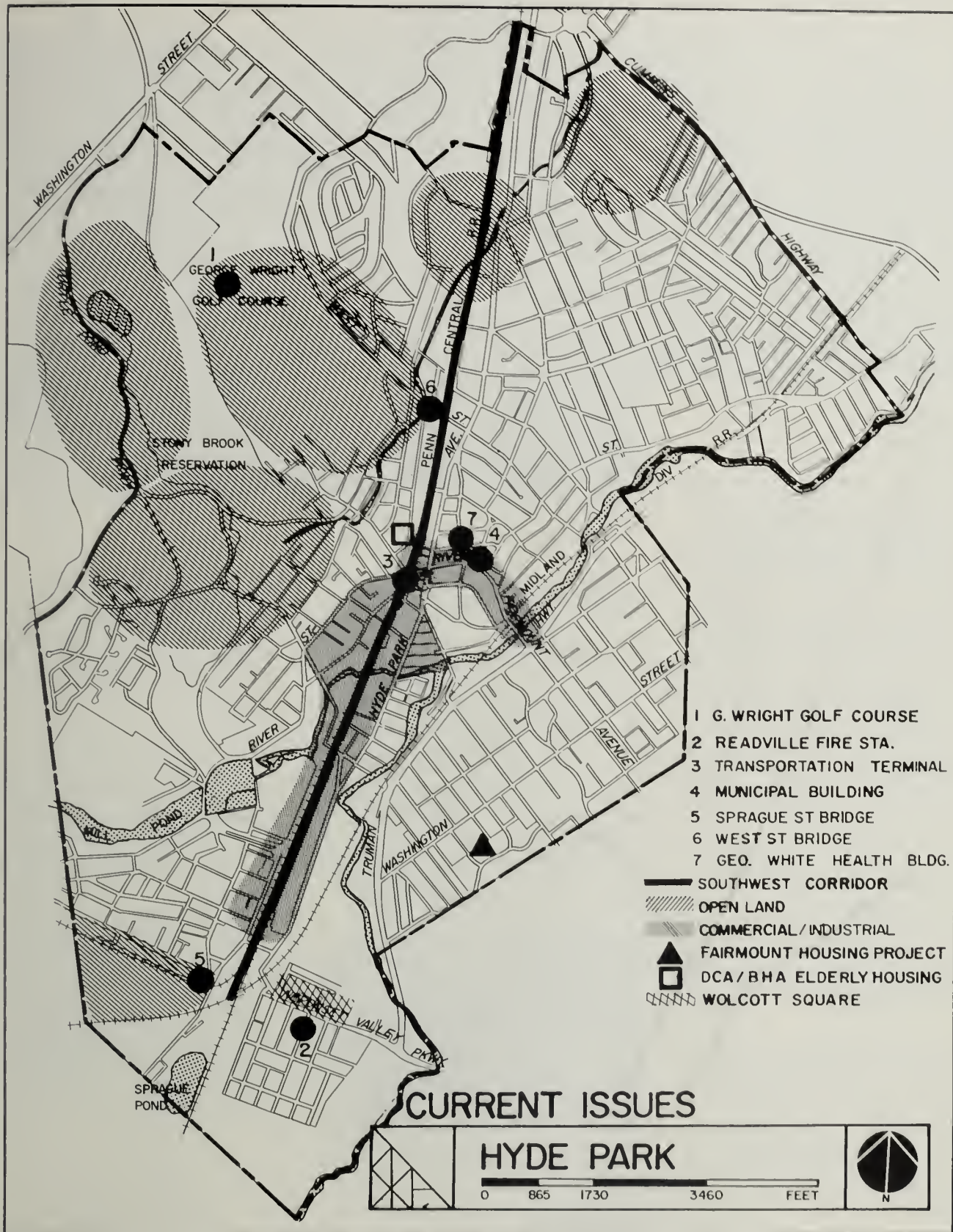
City acquisition of open land is more difficult as it requires the use of scarce funds to purchase expensive real estate. In some cases, however, this strategy should be recommended. For example, in areas where there is inadequate park land available to residents or where a specific parcel has unusual natural features such as marsh, ledge or scenic views, acquisition or open space easements should be considered.

The Conservation Commission, using Natural Areas Fund appropriations, has purchased three sites in Hyde Park for protective purposes and has been authorized to purchase four other sites.

Another option is for community groups interested in protecting local open space to form Neighborhood Land Trusts. Boston Natural Areas Fund personnel can help groups obtain technical assistance in setting up such a land trust.¹

The City should re-examine the zoning designation for all large vacant tracts of land to determine which sites should be set aside for conservation and which sites are suitable for development. Development guidelines for these sites should be clearly established by both Hyde Park residents and City officials.

¹ A Neighborhood Land Trust is formed by community residents to preserve and protect open space. By forming this private, non-profit corporation, the community can own and manage local natural areas for conservation and recreational uses.



IV. Summary of Proposed Three-Year Improvement Program (1979-1981)

A. COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Over the next three years, development strategies in Hyde Park should focus on maintenance of its physical structure, revitalization of its economic base, and promoting an image based on its assets as an attractive community.

Maintenance of Hyde Park's housing stock, including the Fairmount Housing Project, is important in promoting residential stability. This is especially important for institutional buildings, such as the Municipal Building, many of which require rehabilitation. Maintenance of recreational areas is crucial to prevent vandalism and renovations should be made as needed. Roads and bridges should also be restored and maintained.

Revitalization of Cleary and Wolcott Squares, as well as local commercial areas, require physical improvements and maintenance. The City can also provide technical assistance in updating marketing techniques, and improving the images of the commercial areas. Merchants need to work together if they are to compete successfully with the management techniques of suburban malls.

The City should also assist existing industrial firms in Hyde Park and promote the neighborhood's industrial sites to firms wishing to expand or relocate. Primary responsibility for these efforts belongs to the Economic Development and Industrial Commission.

The City should provide support for neighborhood associations and block clubs in Hyde Park. In addition to responsive delivery of services, such as street repair and police protection, the City can develop promotional events and printed material to draw attention to the natural assets of Hyde Park.



Home in Cleary Square area.

B. MAJOR OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES FOR PUBLIC FUNDS

1. Residential Stability

As of April, 1979, 1,752 homeowners had applied to the HIP program. This represents over 30% of the eligible housing stock. A goal of 45% participation of eligible housing stock is realistic for 1981. At approximately \$800 per case, this would entail 1,100 cases or \$880,000 to be allocated from 1979 through 1981. Target areas should focus on the sections west of Cleary Square along Hyde Park Avenue and sections of Readville. The current program prohibits use of HIP more than once. Since the program is more than five years old, allowing former users to participate in HIP again may prompt additional renovations. The program should be analyzed with this in mind.

Water pressure is reportedly low in the Stonybrook section, Windham Street, Linden Street and in neighborhoods adjacent to the Milton town line. These sections should receive further analysis and action in the immediate future.

The Readville Fire Station, and the Hyde Park Municipal Building should be scheduled for major renovations as soon as the City's bonding capacity for capital improvements improves to allow the City to finance these major projects.

The State Department of Public Works should be urged to reconstruct the West and Sprague Streets' bridges to increase capacity to a minimum of 15 tons. This would provide an incentive for existing industrial firms to remain and for new firms to locate in Hyde Park.

The City's Parks Department should receive adequate funding to insure that playground and park facilities in Hyde Park will be properly and regularly maintained in future years. Capital monies are merely wasted unless sufficient allocations are made for maintenance of all facilities, new and old.



View of industrial area near Westinghouse, with Blue Hills in background.

2. Commercial Revitalization

A transportation terminal in Cleary Square should receive high priority, as it would enhance retail development, reduce traffic congestion, and remove the presently unsafe bus boarding conditions. The design and construction of the terminal should be timed to coincide with the relocation, a result of Southwest Corridor Rail Improvements. Renovations to the Municipal Building would increase the use of this structure as a community center. Funds for RESTORE should continue to be made available, provided design review of renovations be implemented. Funds should also be made available for redesign of major traffic intersections with appropriate traffic signalization in Cleary Square. The two new parking lots require cleaning and maintenance and funds should be appropriated for this purpose. Finally, funds should be made available for further amenities, such as trees and street furniture in both Cleary and Wolcott Squares.

3. Industrial Development

A large portion of land south and west of Cleary Square is zoned for light manufacturing and industrial uses. Many of the buildings are partially vacant or underutilized. Potential exists for new development which can be made attractive through tax considerations. Transportation access to major routes is good and the labor is plentiful. Unemployment has been exceptionally high in Hyde Park and the City as a whole. The City's Economic Development and Industrial Commission should actively solicit suitable firms to locate in Hyde Park to add to the tax rolls and to provide needed jobs to area residents. This will also encourage new residents to locate in Hyde Park.



Home in Fairmount area.

4. Human Services

Youth problems and needs are of highest priority for human services due to their recurring impact on residential confidence. The Police Department should continue its efforts to break up corner gangs. Social services addressing the adolescent population should continue to receive financial support which should leverage other public and private funding. A coalition for youth advocacy should be formed to coordinate existing youth services. Parks and recreational areas should be maintained to prevent vandalism and promote use.

Elderly services, especially in the area of health care will increasingly demand attention and should be supported whenever possible. The George White Health Center should be renovated so as to better provide quality care for Hyde Park's elderly citizens.

THREE-YEAR PROGRAM SUMMARY TABLE

Issues	Strategy	1978 Investment Program	1979-81 Neighborhood Improvement Program Activities
Housing	Maintain good condition of housing stock.	H.I.P. - \$350,000	Target HIP to area south of Cleary Square, Readville, Summer and Business Streets.
	Strengthen residential confidences.	Ross Field Security Patrol \$16,060	Target HIP to new homeowners. Assist in formation of block clubs. Release BRA study of new homeowners. Develop Hyde Park promotional material. Focus on preservation of Urban Wilds sites and historical buildings. Construction of single family homes on Arborfield Road.
	Serve housing needs of special population.	Fairmount Housing Project Security Patrol - \$32,120	Target HIP 50% program to elderly homeowners. Construct elderly housing on Summer Street, Blake Estates. Continue renovations and maintenance at Fairmount Housing Project.
Commercial Revitalization	Improve image and appearance of Cleary Square.	RESTORE - \$20,000 Cleary Square Security Patrol \$53,065	Continue RESTORE & BESURE rebates. Form Design Review Committee. Develop Cleary Square logo and advertising campaign. Allocate funding for trees, amenities, maintenance of parking lots.
	Diversify retail mix.		Undertake marketing analysis. Market vacant & underutilized commercial space.
	Relieve traffic congestion.		Undertake traffic study. Develop design for transportation terminal.
	Strengthen Wolcott Square.		Enforce code regulations on buildings.
Industrial Development	Market developable sites.		Monitor status of developable properties. Identify and attract expanding businesses in and near Hyde Park. Target amenities to sites where appropriate. Make available financial assistance to firms desiring to expand or move in. Identify and apply for designation of historically significant industrial buildings, to garner appropriate funds.
	Retain existing firms.		Monitor firms satisfaction with being in Hyde Park. Make available financial packages where appropriate.
Public Facilities and Public Improvements	Increase efficiency and usage of municipal facilities.	Ross Field light towers - \$90,000	Allocate funds for renovation of Municipal Building, George Robert White Health building, Readville Fire Station. Allocate maintenance funds for playgrounds and parks.
	Eliminate problems with water pressure.		Replace selected water lines.
	Remove potentially hazardous bridge conditions.		Secure bridge replacement funds for Sprague, West Streets' bridges. Determine improvements needed for River Street bridge.

Issue	Strategy	1978 Public Investment Program	1979-81 Neighborhood Improvement Program Activities
Human Services	Reduce youth crime.	Renovations to Hyde Park YMCA - \$28,700 Youth Activities Development Corporation - \$15,000	Fund additional improvements to YMCA, where needed. Investigate possibility of addition to YMCA building. Form crime watch neighborhood organizations. Form coalition for youth services.
	Meet needs of elderly.	BRA study of elderly services and needs.	Renovation of George Robert White Health Center. Construction of elderly housing developments, Summer St. & Blake Estates. Continue Senior Shuttle.

V. Appendices

A. NEIGHBORHOOD HISTORY*

Originally part of Dorchester, Dedham and Milton, Hyde Park became a town in 1868 and in 1912, was the last district to be annexed to the City of Boston.

As a town, Hyde Park's motto was "Si Tentas Perfice" — "What you take up, finish." The oldest house was built in 1719 in what is now Readville. In 1714 the first dam and paper mill was built along the Neponset River near what was to become the Diamond International plant. Fairmount was originally developed by the "Twenty Associates" who built many homes along Fairmount Avenue in the 1860's. Camp Meigs in Readville was a training ground where the first black regiment mustered for the Civil War was readied. James Munroe Trotter, the first black officer of the American Army, received his training here.

Hyde Park was noted for its leadership in women's suffrage and the abolition movements. Pioneers for their causes, the Grimke sisters, Angelina and Sarah, Mehitabel Sunderland, Hyde Park's first doctor, and Theodore Weld spoke out against the suppression of human liberties. Women were allowed to vote for town committee members in Hyde Park long before there was general women's suffrage. As an intellectual climate, Hyde Park attracted many well-known persons who visited often, including John Greenleaf Whittier, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and the artist John J. Enneking who made his home on Webster Street.

*Partially adapted from "Hyde Park," *Boston 200 Neighborhood History Series*, 1976 and information provided by the Hyde Park Historical Society.

During the late 1800's, Hyde Park's industry, consisting of paper mills, cotton mills and factories, grew rapidly because of available water power from nearby rivers such as Mother Brook, a man-made canal dug in the middle 1800's to connect the Charles and Neponset Rivers. From a village of 1,512 in 1887, the town grew to 15,000 by 1912. No one ethnic group has ever dominated Hyde Park, as in other communities, and the same holds true today.

The extension of the Penn Central Mainline tracks and the trolley line into Hyde Park further attracted new industry and settlers. Easy and inexpensive access to the downtown encouraged many to escape the inner city for the grassy yards and country houses while still commuting to Boston for work.

A general dissatisfaction with the town water rates and service is often given as the reason why a majority of Hyde Park's 3,000 odd voters decided in the November, 1911 election to join the City of Boston. Over the years, however, there have been stirrings by Hyde Park residents to return to the status of a town. In 1962, because of dissatisfaction with the proposed Southwest Expressway which would have started at Roxbury Crossing and sliced through Roslindale and Hyde Park to link up with Rte. 128 in Canton, residents petitioned their legislators to sever Hyde Park from the City and to join Norfolk County. This effort failed to win a majority support of the legislators although later during Governor Sargent's administration the expressway proposal was finally withdrawn.

B. COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION OPPORTUNITIES

1. Introduction

There are many ways in which the Hyde Park community shapes and directs growth within its neighborhoods and commercial centers. Planting shrubs along property lines, utilizing the Housing Improvement Program, and voicing concerns at zoning hearings all affect the type and quality of life in Hyde Park. There are, however, several opportunities for community action at a larger scale which can effectively have a long-term impact on the growth of the community.

2. Zoning Changes

Zoning is a legal tool used to shape land use patterns and regulate the scale of development within given boundaries. The zoning districts in Hyde Park have served the community in establishing residential and commercial uses that are reasonably consistent in scale and density. In the last ten years, changes in residential, commercial and industrial demands have led to a breakdown, in some instances, of zoning functions. Weekly zoning variance applications and the encroachment of non-compatible uses upon one another indicate a need to re-evaluate the existing zoning in Hyde Park and make appropriate changes in the designation of zoning areas.

The procedures for changes and modification of the Boston Zoning Code are well established. The following is an outline of the procedures:

a. Change of Zoning (Procedure A)

- (1) Proposed zoning change is presented to the BRA Board for approval.
- (2) BRA Board recommends change to the Zoning Commission.
- (3) Zoning Commission holds public hearing following advertisement and notification of appropriate parties.

(4) Zoning Commission can pass measure with seven affirmative votes.

(5) Ordinance goes to the Mayor.

(6) Mayor can: (1) approve ordinance, (2) veto ordinance (veto can be overridden with nine affirmative votes of the Zoning Commission), (3) take no action (this results in automatic passage after 15 days), or (4) return measure to Zoning Commission with recommendations.

b. Change of Zoning (Procedure B)

(1) Citizen group request hearing before the Zoning Commission.

(2) Zoning Commission asks BRA for recommendation.

(3-6) Same as Procedure A.

3. Community Development Block Grant (CD) and Capital Budget (CB) Proposals

The CD program involves the distribution of Federal funds that come to the City with Federal requirements that certain neighborhood improvement activities and citizen participation be carried on under the program. The use of CD funds are primarily limited to housing, neighborhood improvements and public services in low and moderate income neighborhoods of the City.

The City's annual Capital Budget (CB) is usually determined at the same time that the CD budget is formulated. The City raises CB funds by selling tax exempt long-term municipal bonds to private investors to fund capital improvements such as schools, public buildings, parks, streets, lighting and underground utilities.

The City's annual process for determining both the CD and CB budgets includes the following steps:

a. An initial neighborhood hearing is held in each Little City Hall district to explain funding requirements for the program, report on the past year's projects and present the proposed neighborhood profiles (October or November).

b. A second neighborhood hearing is held to receive and discuss neighborhood proposals for funding the next year (November or December).

c. The Little City Hall Manager, Office of Program Development (OPD) Programmer and BRA Neighborhood Planner meet to review funding requests and prepare a proposed Neighborhood Improvement Plan (December and January).

d. The proposed Neighborhood Improvement Plans are presented by OPD to the Mayor's Neighborhood Development Council (NDC) and the Mayor for review.

e. Upon approval of the Mayor, the proposed Neighborhood Improvement Programs are submitted to the City Council for their review and approval (February or March).

f. The City Council holds a series of neighborhood hearings on the proposed budgets. It then approves the budgets with amendments based on opinions voiced at the hearings (March or April).

g. The Mayor reviews and approves the final Neighborhood Improvement Plans (April or May).

h. The proposed CD application and budget is submitted to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for its review and funding (May and June).

i. The CD funds become available for spending (July 1st).

4. Summary

The planning process is ongoing. Day-to-day decisions make up one part of the process. By establishing medium and long-range goals for the community's growth, these day-to-day decisions and comprehensive planning programs can reflect the values and desires of the Hyde Park district.

Community participation in both the procedures for change and program development are vital in maximizing the benefits of a comprehensive planning process in Hyde Park.

CITY OF BOSTON

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BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

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Kane Simonian, *Secretary*

Robert J. Ryan, *Director*

NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING PROGRAM

Roy Bishop, *Director*

James Baecker, *Assistant Director*

Carole Mathieson, *Hyde Park Planner*

Kimberly Robinson, *Assistant Planner*

